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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

United Nations Population Award

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award, established by the Assembly in its resolution 36/201 of 17 December 1981. The report, which covers 1997, was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112 of 26 April 1982.

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ANNEX

Report on the 1997 United Nations Population Award

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 17 December 1981, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/201, entitled "Establishment of the United Nations Population Award". The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, to an institution or institutions or to any combination thereof for the most outstanding contribution to increasing awareness of population questions or to finding solutions to them.

2. The laureate(s) is selected by the Committee for the United Nations Population Award, which is composed of representatives of 10 Member States of the United Nations elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years.

3. In 1994, the Economic and Social Council selected the following countries to serve on the Committee for the three-year period beginning on 1 January 1995: Belarus, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo (the former Zaire), El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Japan, Netherlands and Philippines. The Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) serve as ex officio members. The Executive Director also acts as Secretary of the Committee. The Award consists of a diploma, a gold medal and a monetary prize.

4. On 5 December 1986, by its decision 41/445, the General Assembly amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the annex to resolution 36/201 so that an individual and an institution could share the Award.

5. On 26 May 1987, by its decision 1987/129, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee for the Population Award accordingly.

6. In January 1997, the Committee elected Mr. Julio Armando Martini Herrera (Guatemala) as Chairman.

7. The following five eminent individuals served as honorary members in an advisory capacity to the Committee: Ms. Robin Chandler Duke, Chairperson, Population Action International; Mr. Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, former President of Mexico; Mr. Dirk van der Kaa of the Netherlands; Ms. Shidzue Kato of Japan; and Ms. Victoria Sekitoleko, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of Uganda.

II. THE 1997 UNITED NATIONS POPULATION AWARD

8. A total of 22 nominations were received for the 1997 United Nations Population Award from qualified nominators. Within the mandate given to them by the General Assembly, the Committee showed innovation in the process of selection of the candidates by choosing three laureates instead of the traditional two, and all in the individual category.

9. After a thorough review of the nominations, and taking into account the views offered by the honorary members, the Committee selected Ms. Elizabeth Aguirre de Calderón Sol, Director, National Family Secretariat, El Salvador; Dr. Toshio Kuroda, Director Emeritus, Nihon University Population Research Institute, Tokyo; and Senator Mechai Viravaidya, Director, Population and Community Development Association, Thailand as the 1997 laureates.

10. Ms. Elizabeth Aguirre de Calderón Sol was nominated for her work in promoting social development when she was President of the Brigade for Social Development in 1989 and for her more recent work directing the National Family Secretariat of El Salvador. She also led El Salvador's delegation to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, as well as her country's delegation to the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

11. Dr. Toshio Kuroda was selected for his contribution of more than 50 years of scientific studies, writing, teaching, technical assistance and leadership in population issues in Japan, Asia and throughout the world. Dr. Kuroda began his career in 1947 at the Institute of Population Problems in the Japanese Ministry of Health and eventually became the Institute's Director. He was also Director-General of Nihon University's well-known Population Research Institute. He has served as Japan's delegate to sessions of the United Nations Commission on Population and to various international conferences. Dr. Kuroda's research covers the full range of population issues, with specially noted work in the areas of fertility, family organization, migration and urban affairs.

12. Senator Mechai Viravaidya was nominated for his energetic and innovative work promoting population policy in Thailand and throughout Asia, and for his promotion of family planning services. Senator Mechai is one of the most well-known names in Asian family planning. In 1974, he created a private association, the Population and Community Development Association, which pioneered activities such as village-based family planning programmes at a time when the strategy was still new. His creative strategies for linking population and development have been central to bringing Thai fertility to below replacement level in a thoroughly voluntary programme. Senator Mechai was among the first leaders to acknowledge Thailand's growing problem with HIV/AIDS and he has worked to frame an effective national policy for AIDS prevention in response.

III. FINANCIAL MATTERS

13. As at 1 January 1996, the Trust Fund had a total of $737,739. Income from interest was $49,802. Expenditures in 1996, including the prizes, totalled $47,417. The closing balance as at 31 December 1996 totalled $740,124.